

# **Mentoring Sponsors: Developing Gifts of Relationship and Hospitality**

**A Workshop at the July 2004 Annual Gathering of NAAC**

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*Members of the body of Christ already possess the ability to effectively nurture seekers, but most are unaware of their own unique gifts. It is not programming skill or theological savvy which will entice seekers into the life-changing waters, but rather, the genuine warmth of authentic relationships built on risk and trust.*

## **Why Is It So Hard to Convince Members to Become Sponsors?**

- Clericalism/institutional approach and resulting paralysis of laity
- A feeling of inadequacy in theological knowledge
- Lack of experience in articulating personal journey of faith
- Inability to recognize that their own gifts of friendship are the key

## **Sharing Food and Wine**

Being human together – the effectiveness of opening our homes.

## **Introductions**

Name; Involvement; Concerns that brought you to this workshop. (Flipchart)

## **Building Confidence in Sponsors Through Modeling and Practice**

### **Sponsor Training: Modeling and Practice in a Safe Environment**

- *Sharing my Story: Recognizing God's presence in my life*
- *Gospel Reflection: Scripture for me*
- *Praying for one Another*

## **Sponsor Support Evening**

- *Gather sponsors in the pub or coffee shop*
- *Debrief: draw out their experiences, successes, and struggles*
- *Trouble-shoot: provide support and resources*
- *Encourage sponsors to offer one another support*
- *Ensure sponsors that you are always available for questions*

## **Practice**

Doing ourselves what we will invite others to do – practice in listening and sharing.

## **Success Stories**

Examples of sponsors who built strong relationships.

1. What did two elderly couples have to offer seekers?
2. Why were Ron and Diane shocked to hear that they were model sponsors?

## **Theological Knowledge Will Develop**

Sponsors grow through exploring with seekers.

Theological content **is** important, but will naturally develop as questions arise for both sponsor and seeker in their shared exploration of the Christ pathway.

“Walking with another person in the journey of faith almost inevitably leads to growth as much for the sponsor as for the catechumen; and those who recruit sponsors will be concerned for the ongoing conversion of both parties.” John W.B. Hill: *Making Disciples*, p. 88.

## **Over to You**

Have some issues been addressed? Learning from each other’s success stories.